

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9489

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MARR, SA, EG, US

SUBJ: TRAINING OF EGYPTIANS IN SAUDI F-5 PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 013811, (B) CAIRO 0089

1. I MET WITH VP MOBAREK TODAY. IN ORDER NOT TO SUGGEST SOLE PURPOSE OF MY CALL WAS TO PRESS FOR TERMINATION OF EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION IN SAUDI F-5 PROGRM, I FIRST THANKED HIM FOR HIS EFFORTS IN RECENT OAU CONFERENCE ON ANGOLA. WE RECOGNIZE HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS FOR HIM AND ARE MOST APPRECIATIVE. (HIS COMMENTS ON OAU CONFERENCE BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL).

2. AFTER WE HAD DISCUSSED SEVERAL OTHER MATTERS, I RECALLED THAT, DURING RECENT CODEL MORGAN VISIT, DCM MAESTRONE HAD AGAIN RAISED THE REFERENCE SUBJECT WITH THE PRESIDENT AND WITH HIM. THE PRESIDENT HAD ASKED MOBAREK TO ARRANGE FOR A DELAY OF EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION IN SAUDI TRAINING PROGRAM, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF AID BILL WAS COMPLETED, AFTER WHICH THE MATTER COULD BE DISCUSSED AGAIN (REFTEL B). I WONDERED IF HE MIGHT TELL ME WHAT HAD BEEN DONE ON THIS MATTER.

3. MOBAREK CLAIMED THAT, IMMEDIATELY AFTER

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THE TALK, HE HAD SENT A MESSAGE TO PRINCE FAHD

TO TERMINATE THE PROGRAM. FAHD HAD RESPONDED THAT SUCH TERMINATION WOULD HAVE A BAD EFFECT ON THE MORALE OF THE EGYPTIAN TRAINEES AND SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED. MOBAREK ACKNOWLEDGED CORRECTNESS OF FAHD'S VIEW, BUT SAID GOE ALSO APPRECIATES OUR CONGRESSIONAL PROBLEM. AS A RESULT, AFTER FURTHER CONSIDERATION, IT WAS DECIDED TO SUSPEND THE PROGRAM FOR A TIME. CHIEF OF EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE GEN. MAHMOUD SHAKER ABDUL MUNIN HAD BEEN SENT TO SAUDI ARABIA QUOTE LAST WEEK UNQUOTE (JAN 20) TO ARRANGE THIS. THE EGYPTIAN TRAINEES COULD BE SENT AROUND SAUDI ARABIA FOR A MONTH OR SO. HE HAD NOT YET HAD A REPORT FROM GEN MUNIN, BUT ASSUMED THIS HAD BEEN DONE.

4. AT MY REQUEST, HE TELEPHONED ABDUL MUNIN TO INQUIRE ABOUT STATUS. ALTHOUGH I COULD NOT HEAR ABDUL MUNIN'S COMMENTS, I SURMISED FROM MOBAREK'S OCCASIONAL MONOSYLABIC INTERJECTIONS THAT TERMINATION ORDERS, IF GIVEN, HAD BEEN A BIT INCONCLUSIVE. MOBAREK, THEREFORE, AGAIN ASKED ABDUL MUNIN TO SUSPEND THE PROGRAM, AT LEAST UNTIL APRIL. MOBAREK THEREUPON TOLD ME EVERYTHING HAD NOW BEEN TAKEN CARE OF.

5. THE APRIL DATE WAS MENTIONED BECAUSE MOBAREK HAD EARLIER ASKED FOR OUR LATEST ESTIMATE OF WHEN CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE AID BILL MIGHT BE COMPLETED. I TOLD HIM OUR LAST REPORTS INDICATED PERHAPS THE END OF MARCH, BUT NO ONE COULD BE SURE. I POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROBLEM IS NOT ONLY THE AID BILL, BUT ALSO THE ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO FIND SOME WAY TO INITIATE A MILITARY SALES PROGRAM FOR EGYPT. AS HE KNEW, THIS ASPECT WILL REQUIRE A GREAT DEAL OF CAREFUL HANDLING WITH THE CONGRESS. I URGED, THEREFORE, THAT THE EGYPTIANS AND THE SAUDIS NOT RESUME THE TRAINING PROGRAM UNTIL AFTER THEY HAVE CONSULTED WITH US. I SUGGESTED ALL OF US HAVE MORE AT STAKE THAN SIMPLE TRAINING.

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IN ANY CASE, I POINTED OUT, THAT THE EGYPTIAN PILOTS HAVE ALREADY FAMILIARIZED THEMSELVES WITH THE F-5. MOBAREK AGREED.

5. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS THIS MESSAGE TO JIDDA. WE WOULD APPRECIATE CONFIRMATION FROM JIDDA THAT EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION IN F-5 TRAINING PROGRAM HAS INDEED BEEN SUSPENDED.

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